Amendments to the Specification:

On pages 3, 4, and 5, please replace the section entitled Summary of the Invention with the following replacement section:

Summary of the Invention

The present invention relates to a first method of manufacturing a stretched mechanical fastening web laminate ~~1~~ comprising a thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~ having two major surfaces, one of the major surfaces bearing a multitude of male fastening elements ~~14~~ suitable for engagement with a corresponding female fastening material, and on its other major surface a fibrous web layer ~~11~~, said method comprising the steps of

(i) providing a fibrous web layer ~~11~~ having an initial basis weight,

(ii) passing the fibrous web layer through a nip formed by two ~~cylindrical~~ rolls ~~101, 103~~, one of them having cavities ~~120~~ that are the negatives of a plurality of male fastening elements ~~14~~, introducing a molten thermoplastic resin into the cavities ~~120~~ in excess of an amount that would fill the cavities ~~120~~ which excess forms ~~a~~ the thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~, allowing the resin to at least partially solidify and stripping of a precursor web laminate ~~10~~ thus formed comprising the fibrous web layer ~~11~~ and the thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~ bearing ~~a plurality~~ the multitude of male fastening elements ~~14,~~ from the ~~cylindrical~~ roll ~~103~~ having cavities, ~~120~~ ~~whereby~~ wherein the thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~ has an initial thickness and an initial ~~hook~~ density of male fastening elements, and

(iii) stretching the precursor web laminate ~~10~~ monoaxially or biaxially thereby decreasing the basis weight of the fibrous web layer ~~11~~ and the thickness of the thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~ from their respective initial values to provide a stretched mechanical fastening laminate ~~1~~ having a basis weight of less than 100 g/m^2 ~~g·m^{-2}~~.

The present invention relates to a second method of manufacturing a stretched mechanical fastening web laminate ~~(1)~~ comprising a thermoplastic web layer ~~(13)~~ having two major surfaces, one of the major surfaces bearing a multitude of male fastening elements ~~(14)~~ suitable for engagement with a corresponding female fastening material, and on its other major surface a fibrous web layer ~~(11)~~, said method comprising the steps of

(i) extruding the thermoplastic web layer ~~(13)~~ bearing on one major surface a plurality of elongate spaced ribs in a machine direction ~~(MD)~~ with the cross-sectional shape of the ribs essentially corresponding to the cross-sectional shape of the male fastening elements ~~(14)~~ to be formed, ~~whereby~~ wherein the thermoplastic web layer ~~(13)~~ has an initial thickness,

(ii) providing the fibrous web layer ~~(11)~~ having an initial basis weight,

(iii) extrusion-laminating the fibrous web layer ~~(11)~~ to the major surface of the thermoplastic web layer ~~(13)~~ opposite to the major surface bearing the elongate spaced ribs, thus providing a precursor web laminate ~~(10)~~,

(iv) slitting the ribs in a cross-direction ~~(CD)~~ at spaced locations to form discrete portions of the ribs in ~~CD~~ the cross-direction with a ~~width~~ length in the direction of the ribs essentially corresponding to ~~the~~ a desired length of the male fastening elements ~~(14)~~ to be formed, and stretching the precursor web laminate ~~(10)~~ monoaxially or biaxially thereby decreasing the basis weight of the fibrous web layer ~~(11)~~ and the thickness of the thermoplastic web layer ~~(13)~~ from their respective initial values to provide a stretched mechanical fastening laminate ~~(1)~~ having a basis weight of less than 100 g/m^2 ~~$g \cdot m^{-2}$~~.

The present invention also relates to a stretched mechanical fastening web laminate ~~1~~ obtainable by the methods according to the present invention, said stretched mechanical fastening web laminate ~~1~~ comprising a thermoplastic web layer ~~13~~ having two major surfaces, one of the major surfaces bearing a multitude of male fastening elements ~~14~~ suitable for engagement with a corresponding female fastening material, and on its other major surface a fibrous web layer ~~11~~, the stretched mechanical fastening laminate ~~1~~ having been stretched to provide a basis weight of less than 100 g/m^2 ~~$g \cdot m^{-2}$~~.

The present invention also relates to a disposable absorbent article comprising a portion of the stretched mechanical fastening web laminate ~~1~~ according to the invention.

Please further amend the specification as follows.

On page 10, please replace paragraph that begins on line 14 with the word "It" and ends on line 21 with the word "material" with the following amended paragraph:

It is also possible to use different thermoplastic materials for the formation of the thermoplastic web layer 13 and the male fastening elements. This can be obtained, for example, by using in the apparatus of Fig. 1a with two different extruders 102, 102' and two different dies 104, 104' (102' and 104' not shown in Fig. 1a) which supply two layers of molten thermoplastic materials being superpositioned with respect to each other, into the nip between rolls 101 and 103 so that the male fastening elements ~~104~~ 14 are essentially formed by one of the thermoplastic materials and the thermoplastic web layer by the other thermoplastic material.

On page 23, please replace paragraph that begins on line 31 with the word "The" and ends on line 32 with the word "properties" with the following amended paragraph:

The stretched mechanical fastening ~~element~~ web laminate 1 of the present invention also exhibits advantageous shear properties.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 25, line 4 with the word "It" and ends on page 26, line 4 with the term "MD" with the following amended paragraph:

It should be noted that the stretched mechanical fastening web laminate 1 can be manufactured by other methods than the preferred method disclosed above. It is, for example, also possible to first manufacture a thermoplastic web layer 13 comprising male fastening elements 14 (= collectively hook web layer), laminate a fibrous web layer 11 to the major surface of the thermoplastic web layer 13 which is opposite to the male fastening elements 14 and subject the resulting precursor web laminate 10 to stretching to provide the stretched mechanical fastening web laminate 1 of the present invention. US 4,894,060, for example, discloses a method of preparing so-called profile extruded hooks which are obtained by extruding a thermoplastic web layer 13 bearing, for example, elongate spaced ribs projecting from a first major surface of the thermoplastic web layer 13. The ribs form a precursor of the male fastening elements and exhibit the cross-sectional shape of the hooks to be formed. US 4,894,060 discloses

in col. 7, lns. 44 – 62 a specific example of preparing a thermoplastic web layer bearing a rib. This passage is included herein by reference as an example of forming a precursor thermoplastic web layer 13 bearing a precursor of the male fastening elements. In a preferred second method of the present invention, the thermoplastic web layer 13 comprising spaced ribs is extrusion laminated to the fibrous web layer 13 thus forming a precursor web laminate 10. The ribs of the thermoplastic web layer 13 are then transversely cut or slit at spaced locations along the extension of the rib to form discrete portions of the rib having lengths in the direction of the rib essentially corresponding to the length of the female fastening elements 14 to be formed. Slitting of the ribs is exemplified in col. 7, lns. 63 68 which passage is herewith incorporated by reference. The precursor web laminate is subsequently stretched monoaxially or biaxially to provide the stretched mechanical fastening web laminate 1 of the present invention. The cross-sectional shape of the ribs can be varied widely to adapt and optimize the cross-sectional shape of the resulting male fastening elements 14 with respect to the specific application. It is also possible, for example, to use a sequence of ribs having different cross-sectional shapes. The profile extruded hooks disclosed in US 4,894,060 may exhibit a rounded edging of the heads of the male fastening elements 14 and are preferably designed to have peel and shear values highest in CD as opposed to MD.

On page 34, please replace paragraph that begins on line 6 with the word "In" and ends on line 10 with the word "microscope" with the following amended paragraph:

In order to obtain the density of the male fastening elements 14, the plate of the microscope was displaced so that at least 15 different male fastening elements could be counted. The density of the male fastening elements 15 was obtained as the ratio of the number of male fastening elements 15 over the area covered by the movable plate of the microscope.

On page 37, please replace paragraph on lines 30 and 31 under the heading "Comparative Example 2" with the following amended paragraph:

A portion of hook web layer 1 was simultaneously biaxially stretched as described in Comparative Example 1 above applying a stretch ration of 6.1:1.